

## "Dry" to "Critical" Water Year Classification, May Heat, and a Summer Outlook

This year will be classified as "Dry" for the Sacramento Region, and "Critical" for the San Joaquin Region, according to figures from the Department of Water Resources, Snow Survey Branch. The classifications are kept separate, so there is not a statewide designation. Although there is no mistake in saying this is a dry year.

With bare ground below about 6,000' in many regions of the Sierra, runoff numbers are still not as dismal as snowpack. The projected median April-July runoff now ranges from 66 percent and 65 percent (McCloud and Pit rivers) to 30 percent and 27 percent (Tule and East Walker rivers).

The final Bulletin 120 Water Supply Outlook is available at:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iodir?s=b120>

The median Water Year Sacramento 4 River (Sacramento River at Bend, Feather River at Oroville, Yuba River at Smartville, and American River at Folsom) runoff forecast is now 10.2 Million Acre Feet (55 percent of the 1956-2005 average). The median Water Year San Joaquin 4 River (Stanislaus below Goodwin, Tuolumne River below La Grange, Merced River below Merced Falls, and San Joaquin inflow to Millerton) runoff forecast is 2.6 Million Acre Feet.

The Northern Sierra 8-Station Precipitation Index gained 3.0 inches during April, and a little over an inch in May. This brings the Water Year-to-date total to 35.3 inches; 77% of seasonal average to date.

Snow surveys statewide for May 1 indicate the snowpack was approximately 25 percent of an average May 1 and 20 percent of the April 1 average.

May has been a roller coaster, with early season heat breaking in the air conditioning units. However, that follows on the heels of what was an unusually cold, wet system for May. On the 2nd and 3rd, the snow level was as low as 4,500', with the Feather River Basin picking up an inch of precip! That storm became a destructive element in the EF5 tornado that hit Greensburg, Kansas Friday night. \* (see below)

Currently, our weather is dominated by this sunny, hot high pressure ridge. It was 94 yesterday in Downtown Sacramento, and Modesto tied a whopping record of 98 degrees, set in 2001. Projected 500mb height falls mean we'll drop at least several degrees, if not more, when the first authentic "Delta Breeze" of the season kicks in. The period

Friday through Sunday should be more pleasant with lower 80's. Cross your fingers. A little early to stay in the 90's.

The 6–10 day; May 14–18 Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlook has virtually all of California in above normal temperatures, and normal precipitation. The 8–14 day; May 16–22 is nearly identical. The summer forecast from the CPC is a 90–day averaged outlook for June–July–August. Temperatures have a slightly better than average chance of being above normal, with the warmth most pronounced along the southern Nevada and Arizona borders. Precipitation has equal chances of being normal; i.e. dry this summer.

\* EF means Enhanced Fujita Scale for tornadoes. First put in to practise on February 1, 2007, this Greensburg Tornado was the first to be classified as EF5; an updated damage–based classification system with level 5 winds in the 205+mph range.

This will be the last weekly version of the Weather and Climate Newsletter this season. For the off–season, bulletins will be issued monthly.

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